

*Bill Creates a New Benefit to Support Medicare Patients in Transition from Hospitals to Homes*

**WASHINGTON D.C.** – Oregon Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Louisiana Representative Charles Boustany, Jr., MD (R-LA) announced the introduction of the Medicare Transition Act of 2009. This legislation would create a new benefit under Medicare designed to support and coordinate care for beneficiaries as they move from a hospital setting to their homes, skilled nursing facilities or rehabilitation centers.

Blumenauer said, “When people leave the hospital, they are overwhelmed by what is often a complicated and risky road to recovery. Patients frequently report difficulty remembering clinical instructions and confusion over medications. In cases where multiple providers are involved, they often receive conflicting instructions from different medical staff. Providing a Medicare transitional care benefit will help coordinate care, develop a care plan for patients and their caregivers, identify potential health risks, and prevent unnecessary hospitalizations. This bipartisan legislation gets to the heart of improving quality while reducing Medicare costs.”

“Our seniors need the best care possible, and I saw firsthand the difficulties that arise during a transition between a hospital and home,” said Boustany, a former Cardiothoracic surgeon. “By reducing the likelihood of hospital readmissions, patients receive better quality care at a lower cost to taxpayers.”

According to an April, 2009 study by the New England Journal of Medicine, nearly one third of Medicare beneficiaries studied who were discharged from the hospital were re-hospitalized within 90 days, in part due to a lack of follow up care. The legislation seeks to address continuity of care problems by providing more support to patients as they move from the hospital to their new care setting.

Nancy LeaMond, Executive Vice President of AARP, said, “Millions of Americans are suffering needlessly each year because of a broken health care system that leaves them without the care and support they need after a hospital stay. We applaud Representatives Blumenauer and Boustany for sponsoring common sense legislation that will save money and keep people healthier and out of the hospital.”

The legislation is modeled after the Transitional Care Model developed by the University of Pennsylvania, which has shown to produce significant health outcome improvements for patients, as well as reduce health care costs for chronically older ill adults.

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